

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

CHARLES STRAIN,

Plaintiff, No. CIV S-05-0474 GEB GGH P

vs.

CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
R. SANDHAM, et al.,

Defendants. ORDER

Plaintiff is a state prisoner proceeding pro se. He seeks relief pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and has requested authority pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915 to proceed in forma pauperis. This proceeding was referred to this court by Local Rule 72-302 pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1).

Plaintiff has submitted a declaration that makes the showing required by 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). Accordingly, the request to proceed in forma pauperis will be granted.

Plaintiff is required to pay the statutory filing fee of \$250.00 for this action. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1914(a), 1915(b)(1). Plaintiff has been without funds for six months and is currently without funds. Accordingly, the court will not assess an initial partial filing fee. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). Plaintiff is obligated to make monthly payments of twenty percent of the preceding

1 month's income credited to plaintiff's prison trust account. These payments shall be collected
2 and forwarded by the appropriate agency to the Clerk of the Court each time the amount in
3 plaintiff's account exceeds \$10.00, until the filing fee is paid in full. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2).

4 The court is required to screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief
5 against a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C.
6 § 1915A(a). The court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised
7 claims that are legally "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be
8 granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28
9 U.S.C. § 1915A(b)(1),(2).

10 A claim is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact.
11 Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989); Franklin v. Murphy, 745 F.2d 1221, 1227-28
12 (9th Cir. 1984). The court may, therefore, dismiss a claim as frivolous where it is based on an
13 indisputably meritless legal theory or where the factual contentions are clearly baseless. Neitzke,
14 490 U.S. at 327. The critical inquiry is whether a constitutional claim, however inartfully
15 pleaded, has an arguable legal and factual basis. See Jackson v. Arizona, 885 F.2d 639, 640 (9th
16 Cir. 1989); Franklin, 745 F.2d at 1227.

17 A complaint, or portion thereof, should only be dismissed for failure to state a
18 claim upon which relief may be granted if it appears beyond doubt that plaintiff can prove no set
19 of facts in support of the claim or claims that would entitle him to relief. See Hishon v. King &
20 Spalding, 467 U.S. 69, 73 (1984), citing Conley v. Gibson, 355 U.S. 41, 45-46 (1957); see also
21 Palmer v. Roosevelt Lake Log Owners Ass'n, 651 F.2d 1289, 1294 (9th Cir. 1981). In reviewing
22 a complaint under this standard, the court must accept as true the allegations of the complaint in
23 question, Hospital Bldg. Co. v. Rex Hospital Trustees, 425 U.S. 738, 740 (1976), construe the
24 pleading in the light most favorable to the plaintiff, and resolve all doubts in the plaintiff's favor.
25 Jenkins v. McKeithen, 395 U.S. 411, 421 (1969).

26 The complaint states a colorable claim for relief against defendants Drs. R.

1 Sandham; S. Roche; Majakian; Rolfing; G. James; Phil Mangis; and Registered Nurse (RN)
2 Masterson, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 and 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

3 With respect, however, to his Eighth Amendment claims for violations of his right
4 to adequate medical care, plaintiff's allegations against Medical Technical Assistant (MTA) C.
5 Barton and RN Garbutt are not colorable as framed. Plaintiff alleges as to defendant Barton that
6 plaintiff notified her on February 28, 2004 that he was beginning to exhibit signs of withdrawal
7 from pain medication from which defendant Sandham had removed him "cold turkey" upon his
8 arrival at High Desert State Prison (HDSP) and then alleges that defendant Barton informed
9 defendant Garbutt of his condition. Complaint, pp. 3-5. According to plaintiff, defendant
10 Barton's report indicates that defendants Sandham, James and Majakian knew of plaintiff's
11 condition and all agreed plaintiff "would have to go through the withdrawal as unpleasant as it
12 is." *Id.*, at 5. Plaintiff does not allege that either defendant Barton or Garbutt committed some
13 act or omitted to act to deprive plaintiff of adequate medical care.

14 In order to state a § 1983 claim for violation of the Eighth Amendment based on
15 inadequate medical care, plaintiff must allege "acts or omissions sufficiently harmful to evidence
16 deliberate indifference to serious medical needs." *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106, 97 S. Ct.
17 285, 292 (1976). To prevail, plaintiff must show both that his medical needs were objectively
18 serious, and that defendants possessed a sufficiently culpable state of mind. *Wilson v. Seiter*,
19 501 U.S. 294, 299, 111 S. Ct. 2321, 2324 (1991); *McKinney v. Anderson*, 959 F.2d 853 (9th Cir.
20 1992) (on remand). The requisite state of mind for a medical claim is "deliberate indifference."
21 *Hudson v. McMillian*, 503 U.S. 1, 4, 112 S. Ct. 995, 998 (1992).

22 A serious medical need exists if the failure to treat a prisoner's condition could
23 result in further significant injury or the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain. Indications
24 that a prisoner has a serious need for medical treatment are the following: the existence of an
25 injury that a reasonable doctor or patient would find important and worthy of comment or
26 treatment; the presence of a medical condition that significantly affects an individual's daily

1 activities; or the existence of chronic and substantial pain. See, e.g., Wood v. Housewright, 900
2 F. 2d 1332, 1337-41 (9th Cir. 1990) (citing cases); Hunt v. Dental Dept., 865 F.2d 198, 200-01
3 (9th Cir. 1989). McGuckin v. Smith, 974 F.2d 1050, 1059-60 (9th Cir. 1992), overruled on other
4 grounds, WMX Technologies v. Miller, 104 F.3d 1133 (9th Cir. 1997) (en banc).

5 In Farmer v. Brennan, 511 U.S. 825, 114 S. Ct. 1970 (1994) the Supreme Court
6 defined a very strict standard which a plaintiff must meet in order to establish “deliberate
7 indifference.” Of course, negligence is insufficient. Farmer, 511 U.S. at 835, 114 S. Ct. at 1978.
8 However, even civil recklessness (failure to act in the face of an unjustifiably high risk of harm
9 which is so obvious that it should be known) is insufficient. Id. at 836-37, 114 S. Ct. at 1979.
10 Neither is it sufficient that a reasonable person would have known of the risk or that a defendant
11 should have known of the risk. Id. at 842, 114 S. Ct. at 1981. Defendants Barton and Garbutt
12 will be dismissed, but plaintiff will be granted leave to amend.

13 If plaintiff chooses to amend the complaint, plaintiff must demonstrate how the
14 conditions complained of have resulted in a deprivation of plaintiff’s constitutional rights. See
15 Ellis v. Cassidy, 625 F.2d 227 (9th Cir. 1980). Also, the complaint must allege in specific terms
16 how each named defendant is involved. There can be no liability under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 unless
17 there is some affirmative link or connection between a defendant’s actions and the claimed
18 deprivation. Rizzo v. Goode, 423 U.S. 362 (1976); May v. Enomoto, 633 F.2d 164, 167 (9th Cir.
19 1980); Johnson v. Duffy, 588 F.2d 740, 743 (9th Cir. 1978). Furthermore, vague and conclusory
20 allegations of official participation in civil rights violations are not sufficient. See Ivey v. Board
21 of Regents, 673 F.2d 266, 268 (9th Cir. 1982).

22 In addition, plaintiff is informed that the court cannot refer to a prior pleading in
23 order to make plaintiff’s amended complaint complete. Local Rule 15-220 requires that an
24 amended complaint be complete in itself without reference to any prior pleading. This is
25 because, as a general rule, an amended complaint supersedes the original complaint. See Loux v.
26 Rhay, 375 F.2d 55, 57 (9th Cir. 1967). Once plaintiff files an amended complaint, the original

1 pleading no longer serves any function in the case. Therefore, in an amended complaint, as in an
2 original complaint, each claim and the involvement of each defendant must be sufficiently
3 alleged.

4 Accordingly, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

5 1. Plaintiff's request to proceed in forma pauperis is granted;
6 2. Plaintiff is obligated to pay the statutory filing fee of \$250.00 for this action.

7 The fee shall be collected and paid in accordance with this court's order to the Director of the
8 California Department of Corrections filed concurrently herewith.

9 3. Plaintiff's claims against defendants Barton and Garbutt are dismissed for the
10 reasons discussed above, with leave to file an amended complaint within thirty days from the
11 date of service of this Order. Failure to file an amended complaint will result in a
12 recommendation that these defendants be dismissed from this action.

13 4. Upon filing an amended complaint or expiration of the time allowed therefor,
14 the court will make further orders for service of process upon some or all of the defendants.

15 DATED: 7/14/05

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18 /s/ Gregory G. Hollows
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21 GREGORY G. HOLLOWNS
22 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE
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